

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Page 6, the seventh full paragraph, continuing to page 7, was amended as follows:

Encoded in the diffractive optical element 12 is a virtual lens that converges the plurality of beamlets at a position between the encoded diffractive optical lens and a single transfer lens. The beamlets emanating from the encoded diffractive optical element, after converging, are directed through a transfer lens so as to overlap the beamlets at the back aperture of a focusing lens, such as an objective lens [[objective lens]] 18. The beamlets are then converged by the focusing lens to form a plurality of optical traps 1002 and 1004 in working focal region 2000. The working focal region 2000 in that area where a media containing particles 3000 or other material 3002 to be examined, measured or manipulated by the optical traps 1002 and 1004 is placed.

Page 9, the fifth full paragraph, continuing to page 10, was amended as follows:

Turning to the alternative embodiment shown in FIG. 1B, the controllable array of optical traps is formed by passing the laser beam 10 through a diffractive optical element 12 encoded with a virtual lens that is disposed substantially in a plane 14' forming an acute angle β relative to the optical axis 500. In this embodiment, beamlets 32 and 33 emanating from Area A [[n]] on the front surface of the encoded diffractive optical element are directed by the diffractive optical element so as to pass through area B on the back aperture 16 of the objective lens 18 and form optical traps 1002 and 1004 in the working focal region 2000. By altering the position of the laser beam 10 relative to the optical axis 500, a portion of the un-diffracted light 34 is removed which in turn reduces the noise caused by the un-diffracted light 34 thereby improving efficiency and effectiveness of forming optical traps 1002 and 1004. Additionally, non-movable optical traps (not shown) which may form from an un-diffracted portion of the laser beam when the laser beam is directed along the optical axis as shown in FIGS. 1A and 1C is eliminated.